



DFS Newsletter

OCTOBER 1, 2005

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The State Employees Combined Campaign
- One DFS Employee Makes a Difference Following Disaster
- DFS Allocated Funds to Hire New Staff
- 20th International Festival November 4, 5, 6 2005

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From the Director...

Dear Colleagues,

The General Assembly ended its 2005 Session just before Labor Day. For DFS it was one of the most important and successful sessions ever. We initially requested an expansion of 79.5 positions to enable us to improve the monitoring and regulation of licensed mental health facilities, adult care homes and home care agencies and to expand and make technical improvements to our complaint intake system. The Secretary supported this request and made it the central focus of a quality and safety improvement package that became the Department's top expansion priority. Governor Easley responded by including the full request in his budget. The General Assembly was challenged by another year of slow revenue growth and increasing budget needs, but were convinced of the need to fund the request. While it took some time to finalize the budget, when the work was done, DFS received 78.5 new positions for the biennium with slightly more than half the first year!

In addition to the funding, the General Assembly also revised and



strengthened the licensure statutes governing mental health facilities, adult care homes, and home care agencies mandating annual visits to mental health facilities and adult care homes. The General Assembly also passed two bills amending the Certificate of Need law that were initiated by the Division.

Obviously, it was the General Assembly's action, the Governor's support, and Secretary Carmen Hooker Odom's strong advocacy that

brought about this result. But it was also the day to day work and dedication of the employees of this Division that made this possible. The professionalism DFS staff demonstrate in monitoring facilities, reviewing plans and acting on applications has given decision makers confidence that we are a competent and caring agency that they can trust to protect patients and residents of the facilities we regulate in a fair and reasonable manner. That kind of respect is earned slowly over a long period of time, and it is the Division's most important asset.

As we now embark on the challenge of welcoming new staff and carrying out our new responsibilities, let us celebrate our success and be committed to maintain the quality performance that allowed us to get to this point. It's an exciting time and we should all be proud of what we do.

With thanks to all,
Bob

Happy One Year Anniversary!

The Division of Facility Services' Newsletter Committee proudly announces its first anniversary! We are all excited to reach this benchmark. Our committee hopes that this newsletter has been both informative and entertaining. We want to thank all of you for your support and encouragement throughout this first year. Our committee looks forward to another successful year!

Please send your suggestions, comments, ideas, and announcements to sandra.tatum@ncmail.net.





Your Role in Helping Others: The State Employees Combined Campaign

As a nation, we have stood by and watched the horrors of the aftermath from Hurricane Katrina. Hundreds (possibly thousands) of deaths, homeless and stranded people, abandoned animals, lost jobs, destroyed businesses and housing, and environmental devastation are just a few of the problems that the Gulf Coast is facing. This disaster has affected us all. But there have been some good outcomes as communities and people have banded together to help our fellow men, women, and children. Much of the recovery work that will take place over the next several years will be led by non-profits that count on us to help fund their efforts to increase opportunities to those who are less fortunate.

Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath have illustrated the struggles that many face. Fortunately, there is another way you can be a part of the recovery effort and also support non-profits here in North Carolina. The State Employees Combined Campaign (SECC) gives you an easy way to be a part of the solution to these big problems. Please consider giving a donation to one or more of the hundreds of non-profits that the SECC endorses. Through a one time donation or through monthly donations from your paycheck, it is easy to help.

More information will be forthcoming about your role in this important initiative. As the Division Coordinator for the SECC, I will be working with Section Coordinators to get you the information you need to make a difference for these great causes.

Overall, the State has set a goal of raising five million dollars this year. Please consider donating to a cause important to you!

Written by:
Nick Tise



One DFS Employee Makes a Difference Following Disaster

Walls with flood water marks six feet from the floor, photo albums dripping with water, and the stench of black mold and decay-- these were part of the daily experience of one employee of the Division of Facility Services during Hurricane Katrina relief work.

When Martha Womble, Licensure Consultant in Adult Care, learned that State travel was suspended, she requested time off without pay to assist victims whose lives and homes have been devastated by this mighty storm during a recent trip to Pass Christian, Mississippi.

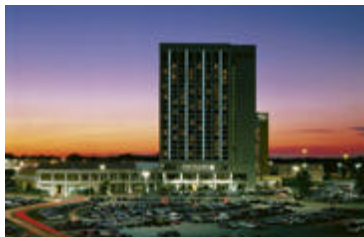
Mrs. Womble assisted one family whose home suffered massive damage by rounding up supplies and packing salvageable items for storage as well as touring the area and speaking with many victims and other volunteers. One remarkable encounter with an American Red Cross crew yielded desperately needed cots for incoming volunteers. "This was definitely not a coincidence," she stated, "but one of many examples of God's provisions during my trip. It was awesome to feel his presence even in the midst of such chaos and destruction".

An amateur photographer, she also captured many poignant scenes from the disaster including massive up-rooted live oak trees, homes washed across roads, and children's toys lodged in trees. "The greater Gulfport area was ravaged by the storm, and everywhere was evidence of the strong winds and waters that rose 15 feet more than one mile from the ocean. Homes-both mansions and cottages- were reduced to concrete slabs and close to seventy percent of the people in the area lost almost everything."

There were so many volunteers working side by side,- Red Cross, Emergency Responders from across the country, Salvation Army, the Military, church groups, and a restaurant from California called Cheeseburgers who fed us every day.

She left the area with a tremendous sense of pride. "I got back so much more than I gave, and I hope to be able to go again."

Greensboro, NC...The Place to Be



On October 1st Greensboro was buzzing with excitement! Not only did Paula, Randy, and Simon hold auditions for American Idol, but our very own Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) hosted its annual conference.

This year was the 32nd year that Emergency Medicine Today was held. This educational conference was held in Greensboro, October 1st-5th. The NC OEMS hosts this widely recognized conference at the Joseph S. Koury Conference Center each year. "NC OEMS uses its conference as a platform for sharing innovative ideas for health care and promoting professional development" (Dale Hill, Education & Credentialing Specialist, OEMS).

EM Today offers medical personnel the opportunity to hear presentations by faculty from across North Carolina and the United States. This conference also provides continuing education credit on various topics.

EM Today invited Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support EMS Professionals, EMS Administrators, EMS Educators, Emergency Medicine Physicians and Nurses, and Public Health Professionals to attend.

Upcoming Events

Flu Shots - The State Health Plan will provide free flu shots again this year for all members, family members, and retirees who are covered under the plan. DHHS Safety and Benefits has scheduled flu shot clinics on November 3rd and November 8th in the Haywood Gym, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. for employees on the Dix Campus. Shots will be provided on a first come, first serve basis. Dependent children between the ages of 9 and 17 must have parents with them. Children under nine must go to a physician for their shots. Family members and employees who are not covered by the State Health Plan will be charged \$25 for the shot. State Health Plan members must present their Member ID cards and a photo ID to receive a free flu shot.



Please submit your announcements and/or upcoming events to
sandra.tatum@ncmail.net

Visit Us: The World in Your Backyard 20th INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

November 4, 5, 6 - 2005



North Carolina State Fairgrounds, Raleigh
www.internationalfestival.org

Tickets are \$7 for adults. Children ages 12 and under free.
Advance tickets are \$5 at Triangle area Harris Teeter stores.
Educators receive a \$3 discount at the door with school photo ID.

Report from the DFS Wellness Committee



Secretary Carmen Hooker Odom has appointed Suzanna Young as the Department of Health and Human Services Wellness Director. Suzanna will work with Division representatives to implement a wellness initiative that will provide employees with resources, programs, incentives, and support in their efforts toward improved health and wellness. Kelly Vick, in the Director's Office, has been appointed to be the DFS Wellness Representative. Kelly is in the process of organizing a DFS Wellness Committee (DFSWC). Each Section Chief has appointed a representative from their section to be a member of this committee. DFSWC will be contacting you with important information on improved health and wellness. Below is a list of the DFSWC members:

Adult Care Licensure	=	Carol Burgess	Health Care Personnel Registry	=	Brenda Sanders
Certificate of Need	=	Helen Alexander	Medical Facilities Planning	=	Kelli Fisk
Construction	=	Angela Langston	Mental Health Licensure & Cert.	=	Dorothy Staton-Wilson
Emergency Medical Services	=	Nick Tise	DFS Human Resources Office	=	Doris Kester
Licensure and Certification	=	Jeff Horton			

Hello from Personnel!

This has been a very busy time in Personnel – but it seems we're always busy! New DFS employees since the last newsletter are listed below:

Mental Health L&C

Lawrence Ellefson
Kay Lynn Baker
Priscilla Milsap
Sexton

EMS

McKenzie Cook
Jeanette Lee

Licensure & Certification

Donna Storrs (Asheville)
Todd Davis (Asheville)
Deborah Robinson (Asheville)
Amy Barnes (Asheville) – Welcome Back!
Pia Headen
Foretta Davis
Linda Juma
Carol Hostetler
Rosalia Monaco
Deborah Trader
Eric Kivisto
Karen Diane Weeks
Foray Kallon
Douglas Sadler

Certificate of Need

Tanya Rupp
Vera Bradsher

HCPR

Carrie Brady

Adult Care Licensure

Jamie Maginnes
Delores Dawson-Rodgers
Harold Davis – Welcome Back!

Retirees:

Denis White, Construction Section
James W. Keene, Medical Facilities Planning Section

DFS Allocated Funds to Hire New Staff

As a result of the recent state budget, the General Assembly, in response to the Governor's request, has allocated funds to hire 75 new DFS staff over the next 2 years to better monitor licensed adult care homes, home care agencies, mental health residential facilities, and receive complaint intakes. As Bob Fitzgerald pointed out in a recent DFS Section Chief staff meeting, 'it is a testimony to the effectiveness and credibility of DFS as a regulatory agency that the Governor included this request in his budget and General Assembly was willing to allocate the funds for the new positions to better monitor the facilities we license'.

At a glimpse, the positions will be distributed within DFS as follows:

- ✦ The Adult Care Licensure Section will expand by 14 positions this year (2005-2006) and 17 positions next year (2006-2007) for a total of 31 positions to inspect more than 1,200 adult care and family care homes on an annual basis;
- ✦ The Mental Health Licensure and Certification Section will expand by 13 positions this year and 10 positions next year for a total of 23 positions to inspect more than 3,000 mental health residential facilities on an annual basis;
- ✦ The Construction Section will expand by 9 positions this year and 7 more next year to enable it to perform bi-annual physical plant inspections of adult care homes and licensed mental health facilities, many of which have not been inspected in the past;
- ✦ The Licensure and Certification Section will expand by 5 positions this year to inspect more than 1,000 licensed only (non-Medicare certified) home care agencies on a three year cycle;
- ✦ The Complaint Intake Unit will expand by 3.5 positions this year to respond to an anticipated increase in complaint calls since the Budget Bill now requires the DFS toll-free complaint hotline number to be posted in all adult care homes, mental health facilities and home care agencies; and The Office of Emergency Medical Services will add 2 positions this year as a part of the bioterrorism effort. One of the positions will work as a liaison with the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services to write and formulate a disaster plan for special needs shelters and the other position will work with all 100 counties to identify special needs shelters for families of special needs clients/patients.

In addition, in order to strategically situate many of the new staff in areas which will decrease travel time and better equip them to complete the required inspections of adult care homes, mental health residential facilities and home care agencies, DFS is planning to acquire office space in the Lexington and Clinton areas in the near future.

All of this will prove to be a unique time for DFS and we will surely gain more visibility in the state as the chief regulator of health care facilities and services. Needless to say, as busy as we all are in our day to day work, life around DFS is going to be even busier in the next two years and beyond as we continue to fulfill our mission of doing our best to assure North Carolinians receive safe and adequate healthcare!

NCFLEX ANNUAL ENROLLMENT DATES: OCTOBER 3 – NOVEMBER 4

The new 2006 NCFLEX Enrollment books have been sent out. Please note that the Health Care Spending Account and Dependent Day Care Flexible Spending Accounts require reenrollment every year. If you want to change any insurance coverage you may have or cancel coverage, now is the time to do it for 2006. The *original* enrollment forms found in the back of the book must be used for enrollment or changes. Plan benefits operate on a calendar year (January 1 through December 31) and elections cannot be canceled or changed unless there is a *qualifying event*. Please note that information sessions scheduled are listed on the inside front cover and contact information is provided on the back of the books.

What's New?

"The NCFlex Program is evaluated on a yearly basis to ensure you have access to quality benefits and reputable carriers. NCFlex is making the following enhancements and changes for this year's enrollment:

Dental Plan — If you are currently enrolled in an after-tax dental plan sponsored by a State of North Carolina agency, university or select community college, you may enroll in one of the NCFlex dental plans with credit applied towards any applicable waiting periods based on the number of months of continuous coverage in an after-tax dental plan. **This opportunity is available only during approved annual enrollment periods.** Refer to the **Dental Plan** for more information.

Voluntary Group Term Life Insurance and the Cancer Insurance — If you decide to enroll for coverage or increase your coverage for 2006, you will have to submit evidence of good health—unless you are a new hire or newly benefits-eligible employee.

Flexible Spending Account — You can contribute up to \$4,200 in your Health Care Flexible Spending Account. There are also new toll-free numbers: customer service (1-866-270-2331 effective 1/1/06) and fax (1-866-887-3212).

KANAWHA DENTAL ANNUAL ENROLLMENT OCTOBER 1 THROUGH NOVEMBER 26, 2005

Kanawha Dental Plan also offers their annual enrollment at this time. A comparison chart was recently sent out via email detailing how Kanawha compares to NCFLEX Dental plans in Type I - Diagnostic and Preventive Services, Type II - Basic Services, Type III - Major Services, and Type IV - Orthodontic Services.

Waiting periods for services with Kanawha for Basic Services are 6 Months compared to NCFLEX Dental plans -12 months. Waiting period for Orthodontic Services with NCFLEX Dental plans is 12 months; Kanawha has no waiting period for this service.

Important! If you have one dental plan and enroll in another, please cancel the one you currently have. Enrollment in one plan does not automatically cancel the other plan!

Please note that Kanawha premiums are post-tax and NCFLEX premiums are pre-tax.

Enrollment kits for Kanawha are available in the DFS Personnel Office.

OVERVIEW OF NORTH CAROLINA HEALTHSMART

On October 19, 2005 at 8:00 a.m. the North Carolina HealthSmart program went live!

As you are aware, the cost of health care continues to rise in North Carolina. The increase in costs is a result of multiple issues facing our health care system today, many of which will not be improved any time soon. However, the one thing the State Health Plan and you can do to make a difference in the cost of care is also the main reason that cost trends are predicted to continue escalating dramatically – the poor health of our population. Seventy percent of the State Health Plan budget is spent on mostly preventable chronic diseases that are impacted by poor nutrition, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and stress.

As a result, the State Health Plan is changing its purpose from being primarily a claims payer to being your health partner. To empower you with the resources and support you need to live a healthier, happier life, we have created North Carolina HealthSmart. North Carolina HealthSmart is aimed at helping healthy people stay healthy and helping those with chronic diseases or disease risk factors manage their conditions before they become more severe. Good health is important for the participants and for the financial health of the Plan.

NC HealthSmart will initially be available to active employees and retirees under the age of 65. However, the program will include resources that all Plan members – including retirees 65 and older and dependents – can use. Specific tools for communicating healthy lifestyles and better health care consumerism include:

- **Health promotion, health education and health risk assessment**
- **Worksite wellness**
- **Disease and case management**
- **Primary care and pharmacy clinics incentives**

By providing routine and consistent health care information, and involving state agencies and other worksites employing State Health Plan members, we think our members will be better prepared to make health decisions – influencing their personal health, the State Health Plan, state agencies and future health care costs for the member, Plan, and the taxpayer.

Good health doesn't just happen. Take charge of your life and take advantage of North Carolina HealthSmart!

How to Reach the NC HealthSmart Health Coach Line: Beginning **10/19/05**, Health Coaches are available for any health care concern for **State Health Plan members**:

1-800-817-7044
www.statehealthplan.state.nc.us

Looking forward to cooler weather and the holiday season!
Doris

Safety First!



As Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas approach, naturally most sections want to put up holiday decorations which include paper cut outs, lights, garland, Christmas trees and other items that support the holiday spirit. In this regard, we should all keep workplace safety in mind when using holiday decorations.

Listed below are some frequently asked questions regarding holiday decorating.

Can I run a drop cord to my...? No. Extension cords are not allowed except for temporary presentations or temporary attended use. Extension cords are not to be used in lieu of permanent wiring systems.

Are candles allowed? No. No items with an open flame even during direct supervision are allowed. (candles, tart warmers, etc.)

How many lights can I string together? Install UL listed (or CSA) lights in accordance with the listing instructions. If no instructions are provided or available, use a UL listed multi-tap to power one or two strands only.

It's cold in my office, can I have a space heater? No. No portable electric heaters are allowed.

Can I decorate the stairwell? No. Not even a plant.

Can I decorate the hallway? Yes. However, don't block exit corridors and exits with decorations since this is our means of egress in an emergency situation.



Recipe

SUGAR-FREE BANANA PUDDING

1 ½ Boxes Sugar-Free Vanilla Wafers
5 Average Bananas

Filling

2 c. Skim Milk
½ c. Splenda
2 Eggs
4 Tbsp. Flour
Dash of Salt
Layer 1.5 qt. Dish with vanilla wafers and bananas.
Combine Splenda, Flour, and Salt in double boiler.
Mix well.
Add Milk and Egg Yolks
Save Egg Whites for Meringue.
Cook in Double Boiler until slightly thickened.
Pour over Bananas and Vanilla Wafers.

Meringue

Beat egg whites with electric mixer
Add Splenda until taste is sweet enough.

Place meringue on Banana Pudding and spread to edges of dish.
Bake at 350 degrees until golden brown.



DFS Newsletter Committee

Sandra Tatum
Reggie Foster, Construction
Denis White, Construction
Wendy Williams, Adult Care
Doris Kester, Personnel
Michele Elliott, Adult Care
Kelli Fisk, Medical Facility Planning
Jeff Horton, Licensure & Certification
Lou Morton, Complaint Intake Unit
Joan Byrd, Data Management
Jessica Trembly, Office of EMS
Rebecca Barefoot, Data Management